

PipeNotes

American Guild of Organists – Milwaukee Chapter

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Volume 69 – November 2022



The American Guild of Organists Milwaukee Chapter

Organ Historical Society Wisconsin Chapter

Present

Nick Renkosik



Sunday, November 6, 2022

3:00 pm

St. Francis of Assisi Church

1927 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave

Milwaukee, WI



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AGO Milwaukee Chapter Upcoming Events

Sunday November 6, 2022
3:00 pm Nick Renkosik, Organ Recital
OHS/AGO Organ Recital
St. Francis of Assisi Church
1927 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave
Milwaukee, WI

March 4, 2023
Organ Crawl
Northwestern Milwaukee Metro

May 7, 2023
2:00 Annual Meeting
3:00 Member's Recital
First Immanuel Lutheran Church
W67N622 Evergreen Blvd
Cedarburg, WI

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JOHANNUS



November 2022

2 (Wed) 12:15 Adrien Zitoun, Cello
The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson St
Milwaukee, WI

4 (Fri) 7:00 Olivier Latty, Organ
First Presbyterian of Deerfield
824 Waukegan Rd
Deerfield, IL

6 (Sun) 1:00 Michael Batcho Masterclass
St. Francis Borgia Catholic Church
1375 Covered Bridge Rd
Cedarburg, WI

6 (Sun) 3:00 Nick Renkosik, Organ
St. Francis of Assisi Church
1927 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave
Milwaukee, WI

9 (Wed) 12:15 Simone Gheller, Organ
The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson St
Milwaukee, WI

16 (Wed) 12:15 Ellie Kirk, Harp &
Renee Vogen, French Horn
The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson St
Milwaukee, WI

20 (Sun) 5:00 Faure's Requiem Op. 48
Chant Claire with the Choir of
St. John the Evangelist
The Cathedral of St John the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson St
Milwaukee, WI

23 (Wed) 12:15 Karen Beaumont, Organ
The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson St
Milwaukee, WI

27 (Sun) 2:00 & 4:00 Prelude to
Christmas
The Lutheran Chorale of Milwaukee
St. John's Lutheran Church
4001 S. 68th St
Milwaukee, WI

30 (Wed) 12:15 New Milwaukee Consort
Kristin Knutson, Soprano;
Tim Sterner Miller, Lute;
Charlie Rasmussen, Cello
The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson St
Milwaukee, WI

December 2022

2 (Fri) 7:30 Handel's Messiah
Milwaukee Area Messiah Chorus and
Orchestra
St. Gabriel's Parish
1200 St. Gabriel Way
Hubertus, WI

2 (Fri) 7:30 Wisconsin Lutheran College
Christmas Festival Concert
Schwann Concert Hall
Center for Arts and Performance
8815 W. Wisconsin Ave
Milwaukee WI



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November 2022

The final two days of the convention were Wednesday, July 6th and Thursday, July 7th, 2022. Wednesday morning was packed with different workshops and reading sessions, it was disappointing that there were so many workshops crammed in to such a small amount of time, and that you had to miss so many workshops that sounded wonderful. Thanks to the planning committee of the Seattle convention for having so many great presentations and workshops that it was hard to choose which ones to attend.

The first workshop on Wednesday that I was scheduled for was Bruce Neswick: Sing to the Lord a New Song. The workshop was held at Gethsemane Lutheran Church directly across the street from the convention hotel. Bruce Neswick just retired from Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland Oregon. His workshop consisted of ways to be innovative in your service playing. Always great to hear new and old ideas of ways to invigorate singing in your parish. The second workshop on Wednesday was led by Anne Marsden Thomas and Frederick Stocken. The topic for this workshop was the new organ teaching method they had developed, published by Oxford University Press. The after a bit of demonstration on the keyboard of their new method, the workshop turned into a round table of what trends the two presenters were seeing in England, and if the same trends applied to us here in the United States.

The final of workshop of the morning was Erin Scheessele of Orgelkids USA. This workshop is always popular, and the room was full of people. Orgel Kids has taken a new approach to their small organ kits. The kits must be purchased from them, they no longer ship the same kit around the country, due to how fragile they were. With that being said Orgelkids has hired a couple of workers from John Brombaugh's workshop to build the new kits. It is a large investment for a single chapter to afford a kit, they are now upwards of \$8000 for a single kit. They provided information for which chapters already have kits, how they have used them and some promotional materials that are included. If you would like to know more about Orgelkids, look them up, or talk to Audrey Rhinehart or Craig Bodoh, Milwaukee Chapter members who have used one of the kits previously.



The afternoon of the 6th started with a great Festival of Psalms at Bellevue Presbyterian Church. The Casavant organ was presided over by Patrick Scott and Janet Yieh and the choir of Epiphany Parish conducted by Maxine Thevenot. The choir was well prepared, and the organists were superb with their sensitive playing. The afternoon ended with a fun concert that included J.S. Bach's Coffee Cantata and a newly composed Cantata Caffeinata of John Muehleisen. A light way to end the afternoon.

Wednesday evening was another Vespers service at St. James Cathedral.

The vespers service was for the Feast of St. James. Another stellar venue and performance by the cathedral choir lead by Joseph Adam and Christopher Stroh. The evening concluded with a recital following the service played by Stefan Engels. Engels used both the Rosales organ and the Hutchings-Votey organ masterfully. His concert included a work commissioned from George Baker, Le Tombeau de Jean Langlais (A Thenody for the Heartbeat of Humanity), which Engels played exquisitely. He closed his concert with Karg-Elert Opus 73 Chaconne and Fugue Trilogy with Choral. The walls of the church building were ringing complete with the 64' Ravelement that was added in 2006.



Thursday morning began with more workshops and reading sessions. In the afternoon I had the chance to hear the second Rising Stars concert. This recital was held at Seattle First Baptist Church, with a relocated Aeolian-Skinner, with work done by the Bonds Organ Company. Before the Rising Stars began the winner of the National Competition in Organ Improvisation, Robert Horton, played a short improvisation, but was very gracious and wanted the spotlight to be on the younger generation of players, all who played well in front of their peers. The second concert of Thursday afternoon was Alcee Chriss at Plymouth United Church of Christ. Chriss played several of his own transcriptions for organ including the second movement of the Franck Symphony in D minor. He ended with the Reger Fantasie and Fugue on BACH. What a great afternoon of music by young performers.

The closing concert was back at Benaroya Hall with the Fisk organ. The concert opened with the Dupre B Major Prelude and Fugue, a great fete for any player. The concert continued with works for voice and organ, and the Auburn Symphony and organ on David Briggs Concerto for Organ, Strings, Harp and Percussion. A great ending concert to bring different voices together to make great music.

John Schubring



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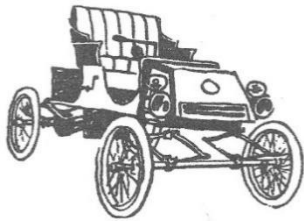
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FROM THE ARCHIVES

by Liz Walloch, Archivist/Historian



LONG, LONG AGO

I recall during my school days, the teacher repeated certain information more than once because it held the key to our success. This accumulation of multiple repeats built the foundation for growing in our skill set. This month, the Archives shares “An Interview” with Sister Theophane Hytrek that was originally printed in PipeNotes January 1983 with a reprint in December 1992. As the saying goes, three times a charm, PipeNotes shares Sister’s thoughts on “hymn playing.” Although I don’t know who authored the original interview with Sr. Theophane, the content caught the eye of Alice Leisman, one of the chapter’s earlier

Archivist/Historian. She saw the merit of a second PipeNotes printing, and I agree with this reprinting. Whether you are at the beginning of your study in hymn playing or a seasoned musician, Sister shares her tried and true approaches on hymn playing for us to ponder, reflect, and be refreshed in our skill. With congregations still in the “returning to the pew” phase, the timing is right to revisit the role of hymn playing. As Sr. Theophane offers suggestions for approaching leading hymns she gives us musicians a richer meaning of the partnership among melody, prose, accompanying and leading sung prayer. Alice and I invite you to be renewed with Sister’s enthusiasm for leading hymns.

AN INTERVIEW

Q. Does the playing of hymns offer a challenge to parish organists?

Yes, it does. The attitude of the organist is a fundamental and decisive factor in keeping hymn singing vital. When the organist’s preparation of hymns is the last item of preparation for Sunday worship simply because much of the music is “only hymns,” then I can predict that every stanza of every hymn will sound alike with the same tempo and dynamics, the same ponderous registration. What tedium!

The challenge to the organist is constant renewal and the discovery of fresh approaches. I submit a few ideas that may help:

1. Reflect for a moment that a hymn is a prayer opportunity for the congregation and that the organist serves as an agent through which dialogue between God and congregation takes place. Choose a hymn then that fits the season, mood, or liturgical theme of the day. Don’t use a hymn merely to fill up a slot of time. Make it integral and meaningful to the worship of the day. If such a hymn is not available, rather omit singing at a given point.
2. Once the hymn is selected, study the text, plan the registration, tempo, and style of the accompaniment to communicate the content and feeling. Try singing a hymn with appropriate text as a Response to the First Reading. Suppose there are four verses—sing verses 1 and 4, pray verses 2 and 3, while the organ supplies a musical background.

Q. What are your thoughts about current practices as far as organ accompaniments for hymns are concerned?

Organists need to be sensitive to the type of congregation (young or old) they are serving and to adapt the key, intonation, and tempo accordingly. The key of the hymn should be just right, neither too high nor too low. When the pitch of a given hymn centers around A (second space in the treble stave) much of the time, the tessitura of the hymn is too high for the average adult congregation and should be lowered. Likewise, raise a hymn with a low tessitura. To make the decision, check the range of the entire melody. The notes C, treble stave third space, or D, fourth line, should be climax notes only occasionally. The complete range of a hymn should normally not exceed an octave. When the congregation is composed primarily of young people of grade or junior high age, these factors may change.

Tempo is basic for enthusiastic hymn singing. Enthusiasm implies life but when the tempo is slow and draggy, efforts to sing enthusiastically fail. A joyful, robust tempo can be the answer. From the first note of an intonation, the organist can give the spirit, mood, and mind-set for the singing. Giving a lively intonation may seem unimportant, yet a creative approach in this matter makes a real difference in the way a congregation responds. For suggestions I recommend that organists try out some of the published intonations which are designed for this very purpose—to give newness and life to the singing.

Q. Are there some basic rules that organists ought to keep in mind when accompanying hymns?

The use of the phrase “accompanying hymns” can be misleading. Usually accompanying someone or something implies a secondary role. But when organists are playing hymns, they are, in truth, leading and directing the congregation. To do this well, the mastery of certain basic techniques is taken for granted. For example:

Organists, please:

- a. Play the notes of a hymn perfectly to maintain the pitch, tempo, and rhythm of the singing (no fumbling allowed).
- b. Be aware of the text of the hymn. Sing it at least interiorly to feel the thoughts and to breathe with the singing.
- c. Hold the final note of a stanza for its full value. Then, allow one beat for breath before plunging into the next stanza.
- d. Articulate repeated notes especially in the melody to keep the rhythm going and to give the congregation a sense of security.
- e. Choose a solid and bright-sounding registration (usually Principals 8', 4', and 2'), not thick or heavy sounds.
- f. If the melody is unfamiliar, or if the congregation needs prodding, project the melody. For example, play a line or two or the entire melody in unison with both hands and even pedal. Or play the hymn tune with a strong solo registration on the Great and the other voices with softer stops on another manual and pedal. Sometimes it is helpful to play non-legato or staccato to jolt the singers into the tempo and prevent dragging.

Q. Can organists use different styles in accompanying hymns?

An experience of a service or hymn festival played by Paul Manz or Gerre Hancock would be the best answer I could give to this question. Both of these fine organists and others like them can make hymn playing a most exciting event. For them, four or five stanzas of a hymn can generate four or five styles of accompaniment with corresponding registration changes for each. The following list is an outline of ideas for variety in performance both with voices and organ.

<u>Voices</u>	<u>Organ</u>
<u>a.</u> Congregation	Full organ
<u>b.</u> Men Alone	Principals 8' and 4', no pedal
<u>c.</u> Women Alone	Flutes 8', 4' (2'); soft pedal
<u>d.</u> Choir a capella	No organ
<u>e.</u> Congregation Alone	Solo trumpet on melody with accompaniment
<u>f.</u> Choir Only	Different harmonization in accompaniment
<u>g.</u> Congregation & Choir	Full organ with free or elaborate accompaniment

For more insights into Sister's music, there is an excellent article in the November 2022 issue of *The American Organist* written by chapter member, Sheri Masiakowski on “The Organ Music of Sr. Theophane Hytrek, OSF.”

2023 Regional Conventions Great Lakes and North Central Regions

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North Shore Chapter

Evanston, Illinois

Hotel: Holiday Inn Chicago North-Evanston

June 25-28, 2023

Andrea Handley, AAGO, Convention Coordinator

Andrea.handley@gmail.com

516 Greenwood Street

Evanston, IL 60201

Twin Cities Chapter

Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

Hotel: Hilton Minneapolis

July 4-7, 2023

Website (*coming soon!*)

David Jenkins, Convention Co-Coordinator

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dpjenkins@stthomas.edu

Kathrine Handford, Convention Co-Coordinator

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AGOYO WEBINAR INTRODUCES TABLETS, TECH, AND THE forSCORE APP FOR ORGANISTS

Have you seen videos or attended live performances where the musicians used tablet computers instead of traditional printed musical scores? If you've wondered how you can leverage this technology, a new webinar created by AGO Young Organists (AGOYO) and now available for all AGO members can help.

[Click here](#) to view the one-hour introduction to the use of tablets and the forScore app on YouTube. The webinar is presented by **Lindsey Johnson**, a graduate organ student at Arizona State University and member of the AGOYO Committee.

Johnson has also developed a three-part video miniseries that will further explore the capabilities and uses of forScore. The first part will debut on the [AGO YouTube channel](#) on Monday, November 7, with subsequent episodes available on Mondays, November 14 and 21.

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